



Small-Business: A Chance to Make a Big Difference

By Alex Pietsch, Administrator, Economic Development, Neighborhoods & Strategic Planning

From florists to restaurant owners to childcare providers, small businesspeople are driving the nation's economic growth. On a national scale, the 25 million small businesses across the country employ more than half the nation's private workforce, generate more than half the country's Gross Domestic Product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

Renton is proud to be the home of major employers such as Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Wizards of the Coast, and Providence Health & Services, yet the great majority—more than 85 percent—of businesses in Renton have ten or less employees. These businesses not only provide local jobs, they are the economic engines at the heart of our neighborhoods.

For our economy to continue to grow, it is very important for us to support small businesses and entrepreneurs. However, starting and growing a small business can be very challenging. Many entrepreneurs have a great business idea, but little or no experience in starting a business, such as obtaining the necessary government approvals or finding private resources to assist them. That's where Renton's new Small Business Development Center (SBDC) can help.

The Renton SBDC, a partnership of the City, Renton Technical College, the Renton Chamber of Commerce and business community, will help address the needs of small businesses and strengthen Renton's economic vitality. It will open on August 1, and will provide one-on-one, confidential assistance to individuals, existing small businesses and other entrepreneurs at no charge.

Programs and expert counseling will focus on starting, purchasing, or selling a business; choosing and incorporating new technology; financial management and accounting; business plan development; market plan development; legal issues; and business research. The SBDC will also provide one-stop-shop access to business resources such as research, access to lenders and financing prospects, as well as workshops, seminars and other training opportunities. Programs will provide practical, real-life solutions and will be taught by experienced business people.

The Renton SBDC will be administered through a contract with Highline Community College and will be located at Renton Technical College.

Renton's future depends on a successful small business community in Renton. The development of the SBDC is the key to setting the foundation for long-term sustainability of our many revitalization efforts and an important next step in Renton's economic development strategies. When small businesses are successful, the entire community wins. Look for more information in the coming weeks at rentonwa.gov about the Renton SBDC and our efforts to help small businesses thrive.

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